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# United States Senate

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January 7th, 2020

The Honorable R.D. James  
Assistant Secretary for the Army (Civil Works)  
108 Pentagon (Army)  
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Lt. General Todd Semonite  
Chief, Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20314-1000

RE: Rio de Flag Flood Control Project (Flagstaff, Arizona)

Dear Assistant Secretary James and Lieutenant General Semonite:

We write to ask that funding to complete the Rio de Flag flood control plan in Flagstaff, Arizona be included in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Fiscal Year 2020 work plan. Completing this critical project will safeguard the lives and property of residents of the City of Flagstaff.

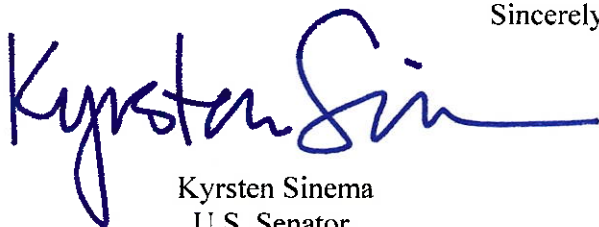
As you may know, Flagstaff is the largest city in Northern Arizona and a gateway town to the Grand Canyon, which attracts over 5 million visitors each year to the region. The Rio de Flag is a small river which originates from springs in the San Francisco Peaks and flows through the City of Flagstaff. For the last 30 years, Coconino County and the City of Flagstaff's top priority has been to mitigate potential flood damage caused by heavy rain or snowmelt which flows into the Rio de Flag. A significant flood event would have devastating impacts for nearly half of Flagstaff's population and 1,500 structures valued at over \$916 million in 2008.

The Army Corps of Engineers has received more than \$30 million in federal appropriations since 2002 for Rio de Flag feasibility studies, design, and the first phase of construction. By May 2020, the project design is expected to be completed, paving the way for the City of Flagstaff and the Army Corps of Engineers to complete the project. The final project design will detail the property acquisitions and utility relocations needed to complete the project, as well as finalize a plan to relocate a rail bridge in partnership with BNSF Railroad.


Given the increase in FY2020 funding for Army Corps construction projects, we ask that you include funding in the FY20 work plan to complete the project and ensure that downtown Flagstaff, Northern Arizona University, BNSF Railroad, and the historic Southside community are permanently protected from a catastrophic flood. The federal government and the City of Flagstaff have already invested nearly \$45 million in Rio de Flag and delaying the project would be a waste of precious taxpayer dollars.

Completing the Rio de Flag flood control project will save lives, protect property, and increase the economic viability of Flagstaff. In accordance with all existing agency rules, regulations, and ethical guidelines, we urge you to give this proposal full and fair consideration as you make this important funding decision.

Sincerely,



Kyrsten Sinema  
U.S. Senator



Martha McSally  
U.S. Senator